



...supporting school-family-community partnerships across Montana

Learning Partnerships:

Schools, Families and Communities Working Together to Help Children Learn

Index (Scroll down to find short descriptions and web links)

Spotlight

Resources for Classroom Professionals

1. The Role of Child Care Providers... ([Preschool](#))
2. Mathematics for Parents Newsletters ([Elementary](#))
3. Parent Involvement Tool Kit: Ideas that Work for [Middle and High School](#)
4. Parents and Teachers Working Together ([High School](#))
5. What 'Star Wars' Can Teach Educators About Parent Engagement ([General Interest](#))

Resources for Administration

6. Ideas to Increase Parent Communication in Schools ([General](#))
7. Kansas Family and Community Involvement Guide to Student Achievement: Engaging Families in Student Learning ([General](#))
8. Family Engagement in Education: Seven Principles for Success ([General](#))
9. Breaking New Ground: Data Systems Transform Family Engagement in Education ([General](#))
10. Family and Community Practices and Outcomes ([Preschool](#))

Research and Policy

11. Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform ([General](#))
12. Preparing Teachers for Family Engagement ([General](#))
13. Research Brief: Parent Engagement in Education ([General](#))
14. Parent–Teacher–Student Discrepancies in Academic Ability Beliefs: Influences on Parent Involvement ([Middle School](#))

Training Events and Grants

15. Western Montana Early Childhood Institute, June 16-18
16. Pumping up District Social-Media Strategies, archived webinar
17. Target Early Childhood Reading Grants, deadline April 30
18. ING Unsung Heroes Grants, deadline April 30
19. Roads to Reading

Helpful Websites

Spotlight

Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) Conference, Bozeman, June 20-24

Meaningful family and community engagement is one of the most powerful strategies schools can use to support their students and boost achievement.

One engaged parent/caregiver is valued at \$1,000 in per pupil spending! (Houtenville and Smith Conway, "Parental Effort, School Resources, and Student Achievement," *Journal of Human Resources*, 2008)

The Montana PIRC will be providing sessions at this year's MBI Conference to support schools' work to reach out to families and community. Sessions will offer:

- **evidenced based strategies** such as Family Resource Centers and parent teacher home visits;
- **tools to assess** the family friendliness of your school; and
- **parent leadership development** so parents can actively be involved in school planning and initiatives.

Sessions Include:

- Home Visits Bridge, Bond and Build Connections Between Families and Schools (presented by the Sacramento Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project and offered twice);
- Home Visiting Works: Opening the Door to Student Success in MT (presented by a panel of Montana schools that have implemented home visits);
- How Family Friendly is Your School?; and
- Family Resource Centers - Opening Doors & Opportunity.

MBI schools are encouraged to bring at least one parent to the conference.

Parent sessions include:

- Welcome, Honor, Connect Luncheon: The Importance of Parents in the Education Equation;
- Your Voice Matters: Strategies to Effectively Communicate and Partner with Your School; and
- NCLB, AYP, MBI: What Does it All Mean?

For more information, visit: <https://toto.msu.montana.edu/cs/mbi2011>

Highlight YOUR school's parent involvement program in the next issue! E-mail info@wordinc.org or sbarmeyer@co.missoula.mt.us.

Resources for Classroom Professionals

- 1) **The Role of Child Care Providers... (Preschool)** Although this article focuses on how to strengthen families, it also explains how child care providers can create effective partnerships with parents. Two sections in particular - "Building Relationships from the Beginning" and "Preparing to Address Sensitive Topics with Parents" – provide tips for involving parents. Read this free article from Zero to Three at: <http://main.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/28-6-Seibel.pdf?docID=12001>
- 2) **Mathematics for Parents Newsletters (Elementary)** These newsletters help families understand how their child thinks about math and can help them better support the child's

learning at home. Find these newsletters, from the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, at: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/mims/Parent_Newsletters/index.html

- 3) **Parent Involvement Tool Kit: Ideas that Work for Middle and High School** This website has lots of easy-to-read ideas for involving parents:
http://www.k12.hi.us/~konawahs/ideas_that_work_for_middle_and_high_school.htm
- 4) **Parents and Teachers Working Together (High School)** Communication is the key for establishing and maintaining good working relationships with families. Find this article with a variety of strategies for better communication at Education World:
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev124.shtml
- 5) **What 'Star Wars' Can Teach Educators About Parent Engagement (General)** This article in Education Week Teacher provides L-E-I-A tips for connecting and encouraging engagement at parent meetings. Read more at:
http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2011/02/23/tln_starwars.html?tkn=VOWFpPE2y2cfbRqInVly%2FFSp4uvSXDUIq%2Fz0&cmp=clp-edweek

Resources for Administration

- 6) **Ideas to Increase Parent Communication in Schools (General)** This post by a school administrator is based on his four principles for communication with families: transparency, honesty, accessibility, and flexibility. Read his ideas for improving communication at:
<http://www.educatorsroyaltreatment.com/2010/04/08/ideas-to-increase-parent-communication-in-schools/>
- 7) **Kansas Family and Community Involvement Guide to Student Achievement: Engaging Families in Student Learning (General)** This guide, developed by the Kansas Parent Information and Resource Center, includes the “National Family School Partnership Standards (PTA) and scoring guide, [and] ...is intended to be used for measuring continuous improvement in family and community involvement in student achievement. The guide includes standards and performance descriptors that identify how schools can assess their family and community involvement procedures, policies and other efforts toward improving student achievement.” Find it at:
http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/Kansas_Family_and_Community_Involvement_Guide_2009.pdf
- 8) **Family Engagement in Education: Seven Principles for Success (General)** The seven principles are: “Be Prepared, Be Respectful, Be Specific, Be Strategic, Be Flexible, Be Creative, [and] Be Collaborative.” This easy-to-read resource from the National Resource Center on Charter School Finance & Governance is relevant to all schools and can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/focus/charter-schools/publications/books-chapters/Family%20Engagement%20in%20Education.pdf>
- 9) **Breaking New Ground: Data Systems Transform Family Engagement in Education (General)** This brief from the Harvard Family Research Project and the National PTA “describes how investments in student data systems are taking family engagement and student achievement to a whole new level. In addition to addressing areas where a student most needs improvement, the data can serve as a catalyst for home–school communication. Parents benefit from having information about key indicators on which they can have an impact, like student attendance, growth in learning, and achievement.” Find the brief, along with some of the data tools that schools are using, at: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/breaking-new-ground-data-systems-transform-family-engagement-in-education2>

- 10) **Family and Community Practices and Outcomes (Preschool)** Head Start's National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement has released an executive summary of "a framework for implementing a comprehensive, systemic and integrated approach to parent, family and community engagement that is culturally and linguistically relevant. These approaches strengthen parents' role in the early years and empowers their ongoing advocacy for quality education for their children as they advance through the education system." Although intended for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, it would be relevant to other large preschool programs as well. Find it at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/pfcp-outcomes-executive-summary.pdf>

Research and Policy

- 11) **Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform (General)** From the executive summary of this article: "The transformation from random acts of family involvement to an effective strategy to promote student success begins with a broad reframing of what it should look like. Family engagement is a *shared responsibility* of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement; it is *continuous* from birth to young adulthood; and it *occurs across multiple settings* where children learn. Although family involvement in education is not an original idea, a systemic and integrated approach to family engagement represents an innovative strategy in education reform." Read more at: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/beyond-random-acts-family-school-and-community-engagement-as-an-integral-part-of-education-reform>
- 12) **Preparing Teachers for Family Engagement (General)** This update to the publication New Skills for New Schools from Harvard Family Research Project includes "information about promising teacher education practices to prepare teachers to partner with families for student success." Find the brief at: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/update-new-skills-for-new-schools>
- 13) **Research Brief: Parent Engagement in Education (General)** From the Indiana Parent Information and Resource Center and the University of Indianapolis, this brief provides a general overview on the topic of parent engagement, including research and essential elements of successful involvement programs: <http://www.fscp.org/upload/newsletters/CELL%20research%20brief.pdf>
- 14) **Parent-Teacher-Student Discrepancies in Academic Ability Beliefs: Influences on Parent Involvement (Middle School)** This study found "that perceptions of student ability held by teachers, parents, and students have an influence on parents' and teachers' actions regarding family and school partnerships. It also underscores the importance of clarifying how beliefs are indirectly communicated in order to improve... efforts to promote collaboration." The study can be found in the Academic Development Institute's Journal at: <http://www.adl.org/journal/fw10/PatelStevensFall2010.pdf>

Training and Grants

- 15) **Western Montana Early Childhood Institute**, June 16-18, Pablo, \$100 includes books, materials, and lunch. LETRS Training (Learning Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) with Lucy Hart Paulson will be held on June 16 -17, with an optional LETRS Training of Trainers on June 18th for an additional \$85. A variety of Early Childhood Education workshops will be offered on June 18th. Session topics include: Center for the Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL), technology, traditional Native games, Native American math, Love and Logic, movement, transitions from Part C to Part

B, and trauma-informed educational environments. Registration is \$20. Watch for more information on the Western Montana CSPD website at: <http://www.wmcspd.org/>

- 16) **Pumping up District Social-Media Strategies** “There are many opportunities for districts to use social-networking tools like Facebook and Twitter to connect with their communities, enhance professional development, and promote school and district successes. But many school leaders are reluctant to deploy these tools because they don’t know how to use them effectively or feel their district technology policies stand in the way.” A principal and a technology specialist present in this webinar from EdWeek. Scroll down to find the archived edition; you will have to register to view it:
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/marketplace/webinars/webinars.html?intc=thed>
- 17) **Target Early Childhood Reading Grants** “Target awards grants to schools, libraries and nonprofit organizations to support programs such as after-school reading events and weekend book clubs... [with the goal of] fostering a love of reading and encouraging children, preschool through third grade, to read together with their families... Early childhood reading grants are \$2,000. Grant applications are typically accepted between March 1 and April 30 each year, with grant notifications delivered in September.” Read more at: <http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031821>
- 18) **ING Unsung Heroes Grants** ING will be awarding 100 \$2000 grants to K-12 educators to fund innovative classroom projects. Three projects will be selected and awarded additional money. The deadline for applying this year is April 30th. Find more information and the application form at: <http://ing.us/about-ing/citizenship/childrens-education/ing-unsung-heroes>
- 19) **Roads to Reading** The Books for All Kids Program provides free books for non-profits, after-school programs and child care centers. It is not a competitive grant program; interested entities must complete a form which is submitted via e-mail. They then receive e-mail notifications when books are available. Read more at:
<http://www.pwirtr.org/booksforkids.html>

Helpful Websites

Academic Development Institute’s Solid Foundation: <http://www.adi.org/solidfoundation/>

ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) Digest: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

Families-Schools.org: <http://www.families-schools.org/>

Harvard Family Research Project: <http://www.hfrp.org/>

Subscribe to their FREE e-newsletters from the Family Involvement Network of Educators and the Evaluation Exchange at: <http://www.hfrp.org/subscribe/>

National Network of Partnership Schools: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/center.htm>

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL):
(Search the site for parent involvement, etc.) <http://www.nwrel.org/index.php>

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL): <http://www.sedl.org/>

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